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Additional office accommodation in Geneva for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Revised estimates to the programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report proposes arrangements and related resource requirements in respect of additional office accommodation for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva. It is presented to the General Assembly as a follow-up to the Secretary-General's report on revised estimates in connection with the 2005 World Summit Outcome (A/60/537). The Assembly will recall from paragraph 130 of that report that the requirements then submitted represented initial estimates and might be revised subsequently in the light of the need to identify an additional office building in Geneva to accommodate the additional staff for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights owing to the lack of available space at the Palais Wilson.

The total requirements for the additional office accommodation in Geneva for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for the biennium 2006-2007 under the regular budget amount to $4,975,900, net of staff assessment.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report provides information on and seeks approval of the General Assembly for the proposed arrangements and related additional resource requirements in respect of supplementary office accommodation for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Geneva. It follows on the Secretary-General's report on revised estimates in connection with the 2005 World Summit Outcome (A/60/537), which stated in paragraph 130 that the requirements identified in the report represented initial estimates and might be revised subsequently in the light, inter alia, of the need to identify an additional office building in Geneva to accommodate the additional staff for OHCHR owing to the lack of available space at the Palais Wilson.

2. It will be recalled that, in its decision 52/465 of 25 March 1998, the General Assembly approved the proposal of the Secretary-General to accept the offer of the Swiss authorities to place the office accommodation at the Palais Wilson in Geneva at the disposal of the United Nations. OHCHR has since occupied the premises at the Palais Wilson. The certified capacity of that building is to accommodate 280 staff. The expansion of OHCHR activities in recent years has been accompanied by a growth in the number of staff working at the Palais Wilson to 391, resulting in 111 people, or 40 per cent occupancy, above the building's capacity.

3. It will also be recalled that at its sixtieth session, the General Assembly has approved an additional 73 new posts for OHCHR in Geneva for the biennium 2006-2007, comprising 71 posts authorized by resolution 60/246 and two additional new posts, in support of the work of the Human Rights Council, authorized by resolution 60/251.

4. In the long term, the anticipated strengthening of OHCHR through the doubling of its regular budget resources over the next five years (see General Assembly resolution 60/1, para. 124) would further increase the number of staff that would need to be accommodated. Additionally, as concerns extrabudgetary resources, it is anticipated that an additional 91 staff funded by such resources will be deployed in Geneva by the end of 2007.

5. As indicated in paragraph 2 above, the additional staff to be recruited against the new authorized posts cannot be accommodated at the Palais Wilson. Further increases in the number of staff at the Palais Wilson would not only aggravate the existing working conditions but would breach the local fire safety codes and endanger the safety and health of staff owing to the additional stress placed on the electrical infrastructure of the building. It should be noted that most of the meeting rooms in the Palais Wilson have already been converted into offices. As regards office accommodation at the Palais des Nations, there are currently some 2,780 offices within the compound with an occupancy rate of 100 per cent. The design structure of the Palais des Nations does not allow for reconfiguration of space to accommodate additional staff as normally would be the case in more modern buildings with an open-space layout.

II. Proposal for additional office accommodation

6. In order to address this acute shortage of office space in Geneva, an OHCHR project team comprising administrative, technical and substantive personnel was

constituted to examine potential locations in Geneva and identify a suitable solution. The team reviewed a number of alternatives in consultation with the United Nations Office at Geneva and the Building Foundation for International Organizations, which deals with office accommodation for Geneva-based international organizations on behalf of the host country. The Building Foundation does not currently have available any office accommodation that meets OHCHR requirements and does not foresee such accommodation becoming available in the near future.

7. Consequently, alternative office premises could only be found in the local real estate market. The OHCHR office space team has studied six currently available properties and a further six properties under development for future options. A table comparing the costs and specifications of those options is contained in the annex to the present report. Although some properties were available at a slightly lower rent, the G. Motta 48 site was selected because it offers sufficient space to meet the existing requirements as well as the projected future needs of OHCHR. Further, the building is in close proximity to the Palais Wilson (approximately 2 km) and the Palais des Nations (slightly less than 1 km). Proximity to the Palais des Nations is essential for OHCHR staff to provide substantive support to conferences and meetings of the Human Rights Council and related bodies, while proximity to the Palais Wilson is important for coordinating the work of OHCHR and maintaining it as a single and coherent department.

8. The building at G. Motta 48 is estimated to accommodate 375 staff. A phased occupancy is envisaged with 130 staff occupying the new office space on 1 July 2006, followed by 50 on 1 January 2007 and another 90 by the second half of 2007. Thus, by the end of 2007, the total number of OHCHR staff occupying the new office location would be 270. This would bring the occupancy level of the Palais Wilson into close alignment with its certified capacity. Full utilization of the estimated capacity of the G. Motta building, i.e. 375 staff, may be achieved through subsequent decisions of the General Assembly on the strengthening of OHCHR as envisaged in paragraph 124 of resolution 60/1.

9. The G. Motta building is an eight-floor structure with an open-space layout that can be easily configured to meet OHCHR specifications and would be occupied entirely by OHCHR staff. The first two floors are designed to serve as reception/meeting areas and would be converted into OHCHR meeting and conference rooms. The upper six floors would be fully utilized as office accommodation for OHCHR staff. The total surface area of the building is 9,128 square metres, of which 8,110 square metres would be utilized as offices and meeting rooms and 1,018 square metres, covering the basement and technical areas, for archive and storage space and designated mechanical rooms.

10. It is understood that the lease agreement would be concluded between the Building Foundation for International Organizations and the landlord. However, as the draft agreement contains the option of a sublet to the United Nations Office at Geneva, with the obligation by the latter to take over the clauses and conditions of the contract, the draft agreement was reviewed by the United Nations Legal Liaison Office in Geneva, in consultation with the legal office of the Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations. The salient terms and conditions of the draft lease agreement are presented below:

(a) Annual lease and utilities costs are SwF 3,625,000 and SwF 270,000 (estimated), respectively, and would be payable in quarterly instalments in advance;

(b) The lease would be for an initial period of six years and may be renewed for subsequent periods of five years. Notification of non-renewal is required 12 months prior to the date of expiration;

(c) The lease cost would be adjusted annually on the basis of the Swiss consumer price index;

(d) Lease payments due for the period 2006-2007 take into consideration the fact that OHCHR would only be able to gradually occupy the new premises. Under the terms of the draft agreement, the amounts payable would be as follows: one third of the annual lease cost would be payable for the period from 1 July to 31 December 2006; two thirds for the period from 1 January to 30 June 2007; and the full annual amount would be payable as of 1 July 2007. Hence, for the 18-month period from 1 July 2006 to 31 December 2007, the total cost of the lease amounts to SwF 3,625,000, equivalent to a 33.33 per cent discount[1] of the annual lease cost;

(e) Partitioning and creating offices to OHCHR specifications, as well as other necessary internal modifications, would be imputed in the rent and would be at no additional charge provided that the related landlord's expenditure would not exceed SwF 1,000,000. Although the OHCHR office space plan for the entire building has yet to be finalized, it is envisaged that the total costs for partitioning and modification work would be contained within the maximum amount of SwF 1,000,000.

III. Estimated resource requirements for the biennium 2006-2007

11. The total additional requirements for the biennium 2006-2007 are estimated at $10,451,400. The additional requirement from the regular budget would be $4,975,900 (net of staff assessment), after taking into account the host Government contribution ($1,540,300), the related initial appropriation ($1,175,400) approved pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/246 under section 28E, Administration, Geneva (see para. 19 below), as well as the share of OHCHR extrabudgetary resources ($2,759,800). The breakdown of the requirements is presented below.

[1] Discount calculation: [1 - (SwF 3,625,000 / (SwF 3,625,000 per year x 1.5 years))] x 100 per cent = 33.33 per cent.

Table 1
Requirements by budget section and source of funds
(Thousands of United States dollars)

(1) *Regular budget*

Budget section	*2006-2007 initial appropriation*	*Proposed changes*		*Total*
		Amount	*Percentage*	
Section 28E, Administration Geneva	100 282.2[a]	2 191.5	2.2	102 473.7
Section 32, Construction, alteration, improvement and major maintenance[b]	18 380.1	1 592.8	8.7	19 972.9
Section 33, Safety and security	190 131.4	1 191.6	0.6	191 323.0
Subtotal	**308 793.7**	**4 975.9**	**1.6**	**313 769.6**

(2) *Other sources of funds*

	2006-2007 estimate	*Proposed changes*		*Total*
		Amount	*Percentage*	
Extrabudgetary	32 200.3	2 759.8	8.6	34 960.1
Host Government contribution	—	1 540.3	—	1 540.3
Subtotal	**32 200.3**	**4 300.1**	**13.3**	**36 500.4**
Total (1) and (2)	**340 994.0**	**9 276.0**	**2.7**	**350 270.0**

[a] Inclusive of the related initial appropriation ($1,175,400) for additional OHCHR office accommodations approved pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/246.
[b] Amount reflects portion for the United Nations Office at Geneva only.

Table 2
Resource requirements and source of funds

Category	Resources (thousands of United States dollars)			Posts		
	2006-2007 initial appropriation	Change	Total	2006-2007 initial appropriation	Change	Total
Regular budget						
Post						
Section 28E, Administration, Geneva	61 921.4	—	61 921.4	301	—	301
Section 32, Construction, alteration, improvement and major maintenance[a]	—	—	—	—	—	—
Section 33, Safety and security	120 779.3	984.0	121 763.3	928	8	936
Subtotal	**182 700.7**	**984.0**	**183 684.7**	**1 229**	**8**	**1 237**
Non-post						
Section 28E, Administration, Geneva	38 360.8	2 191.5	40 552.3	—	—	—
Section 32, Construction, alteration, improvement and major maintenance[a]	18 380.1	1 592.8	19 972.9	—	—	—
Section 33, Safety and security	69 352.1	207.6	69 559.7	—	—	—
Subtotal	**126 093.0**	**3 991.9**	**130 084.9**	—	—	—
Total regular budget	**308 793.7**	**4 975.9**	**313 769.6**	—	—	—
Extrabudgetary						
Section 28E, Administration, Geneva	25 101.8	1 959.1	27 060.9	94	—	94
Section 33, Safety and security	7 098.5	800.7	7 899.2	40	7	47
Host Government contribution	—	1 540.3	1 540.3	—	—	—
Total extrabudgetary and host Government	**32 200.3**	**4 300.1**	**36 500.4**	**134**	**7**	**141**
Grand total	**340 994.0**	**9 276.0**	**350 270.0**	**1 363**	**15**	**1 378**

[a] Amount reflects portion for the United Nations Office at Geneva only.

12. The amount of $4,975,900 represents the United Nations costs relating to post ($984,000, net of staff assessment) and non-post ($3,991,900) requirements for the proposed additional office premises for OHCHR. An additional amount of $232,000 would be required under section 35, Staff assessment, to be offset by an equivalent amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment. The amount of $984,000 relates to the establishment of eight Security Service posts, representing the regular budget share of the number of posts under section 33, Safety and security, necessary to ensure the security and safety coverage of the G. Motta 48 building in accordance with the Headquarters Minimum Operating Security Standards.

13. The non-post estimated requirements of $2,191,500 under section 28E, Administration, Geneva, would provide for (a) general temporary assistance needs ($144,000) for local area and telephone network technical maintenance and for messengers and internal mail service; (b) general operating expenses ($1,986,300) to provide for rental and maintenance of premises, utilities, central communications requirements, shuttle bus service and general insurance, less the contribution of the host Government ($777,300); and (c) central supplies and materials ($22,500). In addition, the amount includes one-time requirements amounting to $816,000 for (a) general temporary assistance ($53,400) of a building management coordinator during the relocation period; (b) contractual services ($163,500) to provide for specialized services in respect of relocation costs and installation of equipment for the local area and telephone networks; and (c) office furniture and equipment ($599,100) to cover the purchase of local area network and telephone equipment and furniture.

14. The non-post estimated requirements of $1,592,800 under section 32, Construction, alteration, improvement and major maintenance in Geneva, would provide for the one-time costs for compliance with the Headquarters Minimum Operating Security Standards at the new premises. This amount is net of the contribution of the host Government ($763,000) and would provide for (a) first perimeter or external security measures ($972,000) such as fence, vehicle barriers and gates, bollards, pedestrian turnstiles with access card readers, exterior cameras and guard house; (b) secondary and internal building perimeters ($1,123,800) for the purchase and installation of access control and surveillance equipment with necessary cabling, access card readers, central access control server and software licence, interior cameras with recorders and multiplexers; (c) installation of anti-shatter film on windows ($100,000); (d) public address system ($100,000); and (e) securing the underground garage ($60,000).

15. The non-post estimated requirements of $207,600 under section 33, Safety and security, would provide for (a) the estimated requirements for overtime, weekend premium and night differential ($130,900) arising from round-the-clock coverage of the premises; (b) costs of uniforms and standard basic personal security equipment ($42,000) for the eight proposed new security service posts; and (c) the one-time costs of the purchase of specialized security equipment ($34,700), representing the United Nations regular budget share for metal detectors, X-ray machine, motion detector system and vehicle undercarriage controlling mirror.

IV. Proposed financial arrangements for the biennium 2006-2007

16. As summarized in table 3 below, the total additional requirements for the biennium 2006-2007, estimated at $10,451,400, would be financed through the combination of regular budget and extrabudgetary resources, as well as host Government contribution.

Table 3
Resource requirements and source of funds

(Thousands of United States dollars)

Budget section	*Total requirements*	*Offset*		*Net additional requirements*	*Net regular budget requirements*	*Net extrabudgetary requirements*
		Initial appropriation resources	*Host Government contribution*			
Section 28E, Administration, Geneva	6 103.3	(1 175.4)	(777.3)	4 150.6	2 191.5	1 959.1
Section 32, Construction, alteration, improvement and major maintenance	2 355.8	—	(763.0)	1 592.8	1 592.8	—
Section 33, Safety and security	1 992.3	—	—	1 992.3	1 191.6	800.7
Total	**10 451.4**	**(1 175.4)**	**(1 540.3)**	**7 735.7**	**4 975.9**	**2 759.8**

17. It is expected that the host Government will provide financial contributions to facilitate the occupancy of the building by OHCHR in the estimated amount of US$1,540,300 detailed as follows:

(a) Support of up to SwF 2,500,000 (approximately $1.9 million) towards meeting rental obligations until full occupancy is achieved. The host Government contribution would be determined by the actual OHCHR occupancy of the new premises as compared to the full occupancy rate. For example, from paragraph 10 (d) above, the amount due for the six-month period from 1 July to 31 December 2006 represents one third of the total annual rent. If OHCHR occupies one third of the building capacity at the time the payment is due, then the host Government contribution would be zero. However, if actual occupancy is less than one third of the building capacity, then OHCHR would be responsible for the corresponding prorated amount of the one third total annual rent due, and the host Government would subsidize the difference. The proposed total of such subsidy is estimated at $777,300 in the biennium 2006-2007, calculated on the assumption that OHCHR actual occupancy would be in line with the plan outlined in paragraph 8 above. Should actual occupancy lag behind the plan, the host Government contribution would be higher, but only up to a maximum of SwF 2,500,000;

(b) Contribution of up to SwF 1,000,000 (approximately $763,000) towards the costs of exterior perimeter security protection, a part of the infrastructure work required to comply with the Headquarters Minimum Operating Security Standards.

18. A substantial number of OHCHR staff are funded through extrabudgetary resources. Therefore, it is proposed that the estimated additional requirements be funded from a combination of regular budget and extrabudgetary resources on the basis of the current ratio between regular budget (53%) and extrabudgetary (47%) staff at OHCHR, Geneva. This is in line with the existing practice of apportioning rental and operating costs of the Palais Wilson between regular budget and extrabudgetary funds. On this basis, the estimated additional requirements to be funded through OHCHR extrabudgetary resources would be $2,759,800.

19. It will be recalled that the General Assembly had previously approved additional resources in the amount of $1,175,400 under section 28E, Administration, Geneva, for the biennium 2006-2007 by its resolution 60/246. That amount is to provide for the funding of what were then preliminary estimates for rental and maintenance of premises, utilities, central communications requirements, central supplies and materials and a one-time provision for office furniture and equipment associated with the 65 authorized additional posts for OHCHR in Geneva, as submitted by the Secretary-General in document A/60/537. This approved amount would therefore be applied to offset the gross additional requirements for the biennium 2006-2007.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

20. The expanded office accommodation in Geneva for OHCHR would give rise to a total additional requirement of $10,451,400, which would be financed through a combination of regular budget resources ($4,975,900) and extrabudgetary resources ($2,759,800) on the basis of the current OHCHR staff ratio of 53 per cent regular budget to 47 per cent extrabudgetary, together with a host Government contribution of $1,540,300.

21. The United Nations net additional requirements of $4,975,900 would arise under the budget sections summarized in table 4 below.

Table 4

Additional requirements for appropriation, 2006-2007

(United States dollars)

Section 28E, Administration, Geneva	2 191 500
Section 32, Construction, alteration, improvement and major maintenance	1 592 800
Section 33, Safety and security	1 191 600
Section 35, Staff assessment	232 000
Total expenditure requirements	**5 207 900**
Less income section 1, Income from staff assessment	232 000
Net additional requirements	**4 975 900**

VI. Action to be taken by the General Assembly

22. The General Assembly may wish:

(a) To note with appreciation the intention of the host Government to contribute $1,540,300 towards the total requirements for additional office accommodation in Geneva for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights;

(b) To decide to appropriate a total additional amount of $4,975,900 under the programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007, comprising $2,191,500 under section 28E, Administration, Geneva; $1,592,800 under section 32, Construction, alteration, improvement and major maintenance; $1,191,600 under section 33, Safety and security; and $232,000 under section 35, Staff assessment, to be offset by an equal amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment.

Annex

Table of comparison of commercial office premises

No.	Building	Location	Availability	Surface (square metres)	No. of work-stations	Rent (SwF per square metre)	Utilities (SwF per square metre	Annual rent (SwF)	Parking: No. of spaces	Parking: Cost/space/month (SwF)	Security Standard Compliance	Comments
Immediate availability												
1.	Vermont-Nations	13-17 Chemin Dunant	Immediately	1 340	+/- 70	472.50	20.00	659 950	25	250	No	Former UNHCR premises
2.	International Computing Centre	ICC building (airport)	Immediately	4 190	+/- 200	400.00	55.00	1 906 450	200	185	No	Former United Nations Compensation Commission premises
3.	Plantamour	18 rue Plantamour	Immediately	1 340	+/- 70	821.00	60.00	1 180 540	Commercial		No	Extensive renovation required
4.	Giuseppe Motta	48 rue G. Motta	Immediately	8 110	+/- 375	432.00	33.00	3 895 000	93	250	No	Available for rental "en bloc"
5.	WIPO Chambesy	Av. De Tournay	Immediately	2 025[a]	+/- 100	700.00	70.00	2 290 750	60 (included in rent)		No	WIPO sublet
6.	Casai	Av. Casai 53	Immediately	1 500	65	450.00	60.00	765 000	20	190	No	Former Global Fund premises
Future options												
7.	Montbrillant	Voie Creuze	Early 2007	3 500	150	515.00	70.00	2 047 500	100	200	No	Under construction Close to Palais Wilson
8.	World Trade Organization Rothschild	Rue Rothschild	Early 2008	2 000	100	350.00	60.00	820 000	None		No	WTO annex
9.	Blandonnet	Chemin Blandonnet 8	2008	3 000	130	520.00	55.00	1 725 000	100	150	No	Under construction
10.	Gateway	Av. Louis Casai 56	2008	6 900	300	450.00	35.00	3 346 500	100	150	No	Under construction

No.	Building	Location	Availability	Surface (square metres)	No. of work-stations	Rent (SwF per square metre)	Utilities (SwF per square metre)	Annual rent (SwF)	Parking: No. of spaces	Parking: Cost/space/month (SwF)	Security Standard Compliance	Comments
11.	Fleur d'Eau	Versoix	2008	8 600	375	375.00	50.00	3 655 000	100	150	No	Under construction by International Computing Centre managing agent
12.	Patio Plaza	Route de Meyrin	2007	4 000	200	430.00	40.00	1 880 000	85	180	No	Under construction

[a] Plus 965 square metres configured as meeting rooms.